

Special Education Advisory Panel
June 10, 2004
Minutes

Members Present

Scott Mantooth	Cathy Meyer	Deana O'Brien
Melodie Friedebach	Mary Kay Savage	Tamara Arthaud
Dennis Von Allmen	Ray Wicks	Richard Staley
Eric Remelius	Steve Viola	Dan Colgan
Shirley Woods	Joe Sartorius	Pat Jackson
Trish Grassa	Dennis Gragg	Nan Davis
Mike Hanrahan	Eileen Huth	Kent Kolaga

DESE Staff Present

Debby Parsons	John Bamberg	Jackie McKim
Mary Corey	Kate Numerick	

Members Not Present

Sandra Levels	Barbara Scheidegger	Pam Walls
Lynda Roberts	Patti Simcosky	Joan Zavitsky

Call to Order/Introductions - Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Introductions were made. There was discussion regarding meeting format. Trish Grassa indicated that she prefers the two day meeting format because it does allow for evening meetings/conversations. Joe Sartorius indicated that the one day format is only on a trial basis. Attendance has been a real concern at previous meetings.

Approval of Minutes - Melodie Friedebach made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ray Wicks seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Formal Recommendations

Formal Recommendations #3 – DESE responded to the recommendation with the definition of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Eric Remelius asked if this item would be considered “closed” or if in the annual report it could be listed that this recommendation was made and give DESE’s response. Joe Sartorius indicated that the Panel could consider this recommendation done. The Panel has made the recommendation and it is up to DESE to decide how to proceed. Joe indicated that at a later date the Panel may want to revisit the issue. Eric Remelius felt that this recommendation is an unresolved issue.

Formal Recommendations #6 – Melodie Friedebach indicated that DESE can only work with the amount of money that is appropriated by the legislature. The legislature would be the ones to decide to close or phase out the State Board Operated Programs (SBOP). The legislature would also decide how that money would be used. Kent Kolaga indicated that he understood that the legislature makes the appropriations for funds but he believes that DESE has the responsibility to request needed funds. Kent wanted to know if DESE would be willing to amend their response to this recommendation to include a statement that DESE would use this information when working on Form 5’s for next year’s budget. Melodie agreed that the Division would consider this information. Kent made a motion to consider this formal recommendation closed. Mike Hanrahan seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Formal Recommendation #8 (Due Process) – Kent Kolaga indicated that his committee reviewed DESE’s response and felt that there was a misunderstanding. The questions in the survey were more concerned with settlement and withdrawal (withdrawal-someone can withdraw a due process and a dismissal-is an action taken by the panel). Melodie Friedebach indicated that DESE does not collect data regarding why a due process is withdrawn. Eric Remelius indicated that he did not like the original suggested questions from the Panel but also the suggested questions from DESE did not seem to get to the real issues/concerns that may have caused the withdrawal. It was suggested that in the letter, DESE should inform respondents that their responses will be kept confidential and that data will only be reviewed in a totaling of data. Will people respond honestly if they do not feel comfortable that their data will be kept confidential? DESE is only looking at trend data and it will only be shared in a broad unidentifiable way. Kent felt that the questions needed to be more specific and not open ended. Melodie indicated that DESE’s intent was to try this for six months and then revise questions if needed. If a call to withdraw is received by phone, the person taking the call will need to ask them the survey questions and fill out the form with their responses. Mike Hanrahan suggested that this be sent back to committee for additional review. Eric Remelius made a motion that the work is done along with someone from DESE and that a copy be presented at the next Panel meeting. This motion was seconded by Cathy Meyer. One member vote no. Motion passed by majority. It was decided that Mike Hanrahan and Eric Remelius would work with DESE on this.

Public Comment Section - Eileen Huth was asked by the Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) to help parents understand what the Special Education Advisory Panel does. They wanted some sort of general information to have at their conference. This might be a way of doing a parent survey and/or getting annual reports to people (could give out the web site). Kent Kolaga suggested that this issue be assigned to Dennis Von Allmen’s committee. Melodie Friedebach indicated that the Panel may want to review information that is collected from parents as part of every MSIP (available on the web). The Division also funds parent advisory committees in some districts – in which parent information could be obtained. Copies of the evaluation reports will be sent to the public comment committee for their review.

How Missouri Ranks – Key OSEP Indicators (2 handouts) - National overview of where Missouri ranks and an overview of Office of Special Education Program’s (OSEP) monitoring process of states. OSEP is visiting all states for an in-depth review of data, monitoring, statewide assessment, etc. OSEP will be verifying the information they have received from the states and are looking at ranking states (collecting data consistently for ranking/comparison). The focused monitoring has been added to the CIMP process. OSEP visited half of the states last year and will finish this year. Data trend analysis, setting targets for improvement, and future activities to obtain that improvement will be what OSEP focuses on. Once states are ranked on various the items, OSEP will work with states that fall to the bottom of the list.

Allan Coulter will be meeting with DESE staff and stakeholders later this summer regarding how the focused monitoring process will work in Missouri. Focused monitoring is a process that purposefully selects priority areas to examine for compliance/results while not specifically examining the areas for compliance. Missouri will still monitor the areas required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) but can also target specific areas for districts that seem to be having problems in specific areas. Missouri will need to decide which areas the focused monitoring will focus on. Debby Parsons indicated that if Missouri gets the State Improvement Grant (SIG) grant (professional development training) that it would assist in working with districts that are needing some additional assistance, training, etc. to improve academic achievement.

Post Secondary Outcomes (IEP Discussion) - Mary Corey reviewed with the Panel data/information from the Annual Performance Report (APR) dealing with parent involvement and post secondary outcomes.

FAPE cluster-high school graduation/dropout rates - Mary wanted to know from the Panel if they had any suggestions on additional drill down or analysis that should be included and to review the projected targets (make sure still on track) and future activities (need any changed or added).

Pg 52 - First chart-Dropouts (LD) - What is known about the dropouts? Could they have left the public school and entered a private school or are being home schooled (if the district knows where they went, they would report them as Moved, Known to be Continuing or some category that would not be included as a dropout)? DESE knows the numbers of students between the ages of 14-21 that have left but are continuing services. Could some kids not be included because the district does not know where the kids went (home schooled, etc)? The district has to account for what has happened to students who are no longer going to their public school. The district can report the student to Division of Family Services (DFS) for parent neglect.

Graduation/Drop-out Rates - Is there a possibility of collecting this same type of data for younger children (St. Louis/Kansas City). Can the assumption be made that the 14 year olds that are dropping out are all runaways? Could it be that the district is not trying to track the children? The Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDCs) investigate the disaggregated data for Kansas City and St. Louis and try to determine the reasons for such differences. Debby Parsons indicated that DESE currently does not know how much of the positive change is due to professional development and other things or may be because of district data clean up. She suggested that the Panel may want to discuss and/or provide input to DESE this at a future meeting.

Discipline - Pg 57 - District policies vary on how they use in-school suspension and could be affecting the data. Districts are not required to report this data. The Panel should review this data and determine what suggestions if any need to be made.

Working lunch started at 11:50 a.m. (continued discussion of discipline)

There was discussion about the importance of school administrators/special education directors being able to analyze their district data. Every district has different discipline policies. Even if DESE collects additional discipline data, DESE would not be able to aggregate the data across districts because it means different things to different districts. Debby Parsons indicated that as part of the process, staff from Effective Practices and RPDC consultants will be sorting through what the drill down process should be. Need enough information to target the big problems. Then will begin looking at discipline policies, expulsion policies, etc.

Pg 102 – This data shows that a large number of students with disabilities are being employed or going to two-year colleges and for all students, the majority are going to 4-year colleges. Correlation between district size and the numbers of kids either being employed (smaller schools) or going on to 4 year colleges (larger schools).

Deana O'Brien suggested that since DESE considers Sheltered Workshops as being successful employment, that a notation be made in the report because the federal government does not consider this successful employment. Debby Parsons indicated that Missouri is one of the few states that has this data. Kent Kolaga suggested that DESE come into compliance with the definition of successful employment. Melodie Friedebach will work with Larry Young, Director of the Sheltered

Workshops Section to determine the numbers of students who graduate yearly and enter a Sheltered Workshop. Is there a way in the future to collect this data by disability?

Pg 110 – These are the improvement strategies that were identified by the Improvement Planning Work Groups. Most of these items were started in the 2003-04 school year and some are scheduled to start in 2004-05. Melodie Friedebach suggested that dates be included in this chart. Kent indicated that there was some confusion between the statewide independent living council and the centers. Kent wanted to know how DESE will determine if these strategies are having any affect. Districts need to have a plan in place for specific target areas and the RPDCs will monitor their progress by reviewing their data to.

Mary Corey indicated that DESE would like input from the Panel on the future activities. Joe Sartorius asked that Panel members review email Debby Parsons with suggestions. Melodie suggested having a conference call with the Panel members that were involved and decide if changes needed to be made to the format of the information (include dates to show evidence of change). Debby suggested that the items could be broken out by year instead.

DESE Update

- **Special Education Teacher Recruitment/Retention Campaign** - Melodie Friedebach indicated that DESE recently launched a special education teacher recruitment/retention campaign. Posters, DVD, bookmarks, brochures, etc. were mailed to public libraries, universities, districts, professional organizations, etc.
- **Response from OSEP** - DESE received a response from OSEP on the Improvement Plan and verification visit. The information was sent to the monitoring subcommittee. A couple of the responses are due within 60 days, some due the end of October, and then remaining responses are to be included in the APR (March each year). Melodie indicated that she will be meeting with Pam Williams and Debby Parsons to sketch out some ideas and will then give them to the monitoring subcommittee for their review and response (possibly by conference call).
- **Lewis Case** - Debby Parsons indicated that a SELS message was sent to districts recently regarding the Lewis case (state providing services to children who are severely handicapped). For the 2003-04 school years there are two steps for districts to do to apply for dollars to support these children. Districts had to notify us in March and will have to fill out an application to receive funding. This information/application was recently posted on the web along with the eligibility criteria for children who qualify at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Finance/SHCPR.html>. The Department decided not to appeal the decision. Melodie indicated that many of Missouri's statutes were written before IDEA and DESE has not updated them. The findings of the case were based on this old statute. It broadens the category of students and is not just for mental retardation but for all categories. The state becomes responsible for these children (including evaluations, etc.). DESE does not have staff to be able to attend IEP meetings or funds to do evaluations. There needs to be a statutory change so that districts are assured that no matter where these children are that there will be funds available for the services needed for these children. This ruling excludes special school districts.
- **Budget (Update on Appropriations)** - Melodie handed out and reviewed information regarding the FY 05 appropriations for the Division. She also indicated that the legislative sessions turned out pretty good.

Committee Reports

SEAP Annual Report – Subcommittee members each took a portion of the annual report to update. The updates have been received and will be pulled together into a draft report that will be emailed to the Panel in July. The draft will then be discussed at the August Panel meeting. Hope to be able

to send to the printer in late August. The subcommittee will include information from the June meeting in the report. Some of the changes in format include:

- Advisory panel duties were moved to the end of the report.
- Data Reviewed (old report had data tables, etc. but this information can be obtained in the APR so a link to the APR will be included in this report).
- Standing Subcommittees (adopting some of the same introductory language along with adding a brief summary showing what each subcommittee did over the past year). Each subcommittee needs to provide a brief update.
- Future Focus, Closing, etc – need to add some web links (need to double-check the email/web addresses to make sure they are correct in the Annual Report)

Monitoring Subcommittee – Kent indicated that the subcommittee is reviewing the state’s monitoring process.

Child compliant investigation review - The subcommittee revised and is resubmitting a formal recommendation regarding child complaint investigation review (can not interfere with the findings of the review or the timelines). A specific alleged deficit in the decision will have to be given to prompt a review (cannot ask for a review just because one party does not agree with the decision). The purpose of this process is so that DESE can evaluate its investigation process and if there are deficiencies in the process, they can be changed. The investigation would be reviewed by someone outside of the Compliance Section. Melodie indicated that DESE informs parents in their letter that they can submit documentation (the DESE investigator also calls the parent). This is not an appeal of the decision. Kent Kolaga made a motion to make this recommendation to DESE. Eric Remelius seconded the motion. The vote was: Yes – 9 and No – 6. Motion passed by majority. Melodie Friedebach refrained from voting. This will be formal recommendation #9.

Future Meeting Dates - The next meetings are August 11 and October 7. At the October meeting the Panel will discuss meeting format (one or two day).

Membership - Currently there are three vacancies for the Panel (two-Parents of Children with Disabilities and/or Individuals with Disabilities and one-Private or Charter School).

Election of Officers

- **Chair:** only one nomination - Joe Sartorius
Melodie Friedebach made a motion to close nominations. Dan Colgan seconded the motion. Motion passed. Joe Sartorius will serve another term as Chair.
- **Vice Chair:** only one nomination - Deana O’Brien
Dan Colgan made a motion to close nominations. Melodie Friedebach seconded the motion. Motion passed. Deana O’Brien will serve as Vice Chair.
- **Secretary:** only one nomination - Eileen Huth
Dan Colgan made a motion to close nominations. Mike Hanrahan seconded the motion. Motion passed. Eileen Huth will serve another term as Secretary.

Adjournment - Pat Jackson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dan Colgan seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.